"JOHN DOE"

By Stephen Allen Reynolds

CHAPTER I.

Cot 12, Ward 13.

Bellevue's wards were crowded that night in March.

A heavy fall of snow, followed by a thaw and then a decided drop in temperature, iced over the city's walks and pavements with a coating which threatened the lives and limbs of those who ventured forth. Skidding taxicabs, unmanageable private cars, and an "L" collision had added their grist to the hospital mill; and in the surgical wards rows of bed-springs placed temporarily upon chairs bore mute testimony that our ambulance had been hard at work all day.

"Looks like a busy night before us, Mr. MacDonald," commented the night nurse of "Surgical 13" as she slipped out of her blue cloak and tucked a stray lock of black hair beneath the little white frill that Bellevue nurses were pleased to call a cap.

"Indeed it does, Miss Prendergast," I answered as I took over the keys from the day attendant and eyed the row of "springs" which stretched down the center of the ward.

The day nurse and her two "probationaries" put on their wraps and picked their way down the crowded aisle. The big door banged shut behind the day attendant.

Through the partly opened northern window came the rattle of supper dishes across the way. Then came faintly the muffled boom of the big bell in the Metropolitan Tower.

It was seven o'clock. Twelve hours of strenuous, soul-racking labor lay ahead of the brown-eyed night nurse and me—twelve hours during which I'd miss my usual nightly dip into the fat volume on anatomy which I kept on the top shelf of the locked medicine cabinet.

It must have been about eight when the telephone bell jingled.

I was about half through taking temperatures Miss Prendergast was at the far end of the ward, trying to calm down an ether-crazed postoperative, so I answered.

"Surgical 13; Attendant MacDonald speaking," said I.

"This is the Reception Division," came back over the wire. "We've got an 'urgent' for you. Coming right up."

"Best we can do is a spring," said I "The ward's just about chock-a-block now."

"But you can't put this case on a spring," objected the admitting surgeon speaking. "You'll have to rout one of your convalescents in favor of this fellow. He's about ready for the basket."

"What's the name?" I asked, to make sure that the right person would fetch up in the designated ward.

"You can search me," came up from Reception. "You'll know the case, thought—stab in the back, broken ribs, contusions.

There followed a click as the speaker hung up.

Switchboard gave me the ward surgeon's room, and I reported the expected arrival of the urgent case; then I gave my attention to the matter of making ready for the sufferer

A husky Calabrian with a badly mashed arm occupied Cot 12. He seemed the most likely one to move.

Grudgingly, muttering curses upon my innocent head, the Italian dragged himself to a vacant spring hastily arranged, while Miss Prendergast flew to the linen locker for fresh sheets.

Barely had she safety-pinned them into place before the door swung open and our nameless patient was rolled in.

He was a sun-bitten, big-framed man of apparently fifty-five. At one time he must have been possessed of extraordinary strength, but now, as we swung his pitifully light body from the wheel-table to the cot, we were dealing with the mere husk of what had once been a mighty man indeed.

He was half conscious, and—as his rolling, staring brown eyes attested—was suffering intensely.

While I stretched a screen around the cot and arranged an extension light, the night searcher went rapidly through the pockets of the torn coat and vest of the sufferer.

"Not even a pipe and matches," he pronounced. "Pockets all empty and already turned inside out."

Together we bared the bony frame of the injured man, but the slit and torn trousers held neither valuables nor ordinary personal property of any description.

"Holy—"

The words died upon the lips of the searcher as we bent over the partly conscious man.

Scars — hundreds of them — yes, thousands of them, [illegible] and frost-

ed the skin of the arms, neck and shoulders of the man on the cot. Even as the skin of the alligator is wrinkled and pitted by nature, so was the skin of this man defaced by some unknown agent.

Yellow and collosfiied, most of the wounds had long since healed. Other cicatrices, ranging in color from a dull purple to an angry rose, spoke of injuries but recently mended.

"What in the name of Mike is it?" asked the searcher.

But I had no answer for the man with the empty manila envelope, for the ward surgeon was approaching, and Miss Prendergast was at his heels.

A busy twenty minutes followed, during which I fetched splints, plaster bandages, and sterile gauze.

"Friends or relatives been notified?" asked the doctor after he had placed the broken left arm in splints, plaster-bandaged the fractured ribs, and bound a compress over the wound in the back.

For a reply I held out the blank history sheet.

"Copy the ambulance surgeon's report when you get time," the doctor went on to direct. "Call him 'John Doe' till he's identified. He speaks some foreign gibberish. I couldn't get anything intelligible out of him."

Over his shoulder I watched the white-coated man of surgery scribble something upon the medicine sheet. Then he whispered some brief instructions to the nurse.

I caught the words: "A small dose of paraldehyde if he suffers too much."

The next moment Miss Prendergast and I were alone with our charges.

Flitting here and there about the ward arranging slipping bandages fetching water and sedatives, attending to the hundred-and-one things which make the night duties of a Bellevue attendant both multifarious and trying, I had little time or opportunity that evening to give further thought to the occupant of Cot 12.

But shortly past midnight—long after the house surgeon had made his "good night" round—I looked up from a pile of charts I was checking to find the scarred John Doe beckoning to me with his skinny right arm.

Not more than twelve feet distant from where I was sitting, the head of Cot 12 was plainly visible in the outer zone of light cast by the shaded bulb upon my table..

I laid down my pen, and in an instant was at the side of the wounded man.

"What can I do for you, John?" I asked perfunctorily.

A horny forefinger pointed to lips dry twisted by pain and thirst.

As I placed the spout of the porcelain cup to the parched lips, and the cool fluid trickled down the throat of the sufferer, the wild eyes seemed to soften in expression. The free right hand patted me on the arm as if its owner wished to thank me.

His thirst quenched, the wounded man's hand dropped limp upon the coverlet. The eyes closed.

With a parting glance of pity at the seamed, unshaven face, I was about to turn back to my charts. when displaying strength I could barely credit, the patient clutched me by the jacket.

The brown eyes opened and stared into my own. Inert, unable to more than twist his head and move his broken arm, the man with the scars seemed to be studying me.

"What is it, John?" I asked.

For fully thirty seconds the man on the cot eyed me. Almost unnerved by this scrutiny from a man practically on the verge of his grave, I looked away.

Coming from the far end of the ward, "hypo" in hand, the night nurse paused beside me.

"What's wrong, Mac?" she asked.

Let it be known that I was "Mac" to her and she was "Miss Julia" to me—during the long night watches.

"Looks as if this fellow had something on his mind," I answered.

Tenderly, moving our man with the utmost care, we adjusted his pillows and did what we could to make him comfortable. But yet again, as I was about to turn back to my record sheets, the brown hand shot out and detained me.

And then he spoke.

It was a musical language, whatever it was, but it was all lost upon me. I shook my head repeatedly, but the poor fellow spoke on.

And the effort cost him dearly, too for from time to time he paused to close his eyes and grit his teeth.

"It's a strange language," commented Miss Prendergast. She placed her fingers over her lips, and signed to the patient to be quiet.

But it was no use. The flow of words continued, broken only by spasms of pain that contorted the sun browned face and wrung low moans from the bearded lips.

And indeed it was a strange language.

Born and raised in a Pennsylvania steel town, Hunky, and Polack talk would have had a more or less familiar sound for me. No, the man was neither a Magyar from Hungary, nor a Pole from Austria or Russia. Nor did his language, have the quality of any of the Latin tongues.

Then suddenly the sufferer ceased speaking. His fingers released their hold upon my blouse. The scarred arm rose, straightened, and the bony forefinger pointed toward the foot of the cot.

Beneath the bed-clothing we could see his feet move.

"Maybe he wants a hot-water bottle," I suggested.

And then the outstreached fingers grasped the coverings and pulled them toward the head of the cot.

"Bless me!" came from the nurse.

"An artificial foot!" I almost gasped as I surveyed the bare feet of the patient

It was a joke on me, so to speak, for in my haste to prepare the man for the surgeon I had contented myself with merely removing the garments already slit open by the admitting surgeon in the reception division. The shoes and stockings had been stripped off before I had seen the man.

Thinking that the makeshift contrivance might be adding to the patient's discomfort and pain, I unstrapped the foot from its seat just above the ankle.

It was a clumsily made affair. Mostly wood, its socket lined with what appeared to be buckskin, the makeshift for a foot seemed to be such an article as a smart carpenter might turn out.

But I was not to be permitted to examine the foot more closely, for the owner claimed my attention.

Pointing to the foot, he spoke again. I shook my head. A look expressive of disappointment swept over the unhandsome yet kindly face of the wounded man.

He seized the foot, fumbled with the straps, and then thrust it beneath the coverlet.

A man of ordinary intelligence and in his right senses won't continue speaking to others who don't understand him. Our patient, therefore either lacked knowledge of a ful' state of consciousness, for he continued addressing alternately the nurse and me.

"This can't go on," pronounced Miss Julia.

She turned to the medicine cabinet and soon came back with a glass.

A few moments later the noxious odor of paraldehyde floated up to my nostrals.

Weaker and weaker grew the grip of the brown, scarred fingers on my own, until finally the wounded man yielded to the spell of the powerful hypnotic and fell into a troubled sleep

Red-inking temperature "curves," fetching and carrying for Miss Julia, answering the telephone and other duties drove all further thoughts of our "Joe Doe" from my head that night. Nor could I find a moment's time to dig into the precious fat volume of anatomy.

(To be Continued

CHINESE WOMEN ADVANCING

The Chinese who had been sitting and musing for many, many years have now stood up in fairly large numbers and begun to be active; while the Japan women in Pekin remain in their seats their Chinese sisters often dance briskly. This is what Madame Hioki the wife of the Japanese minister to the Chinese Republic, said on her return to Tokio a few days ago. She had been in Chosen, China and Chili before. She was in Seoul after that atrocious murder of the unfortunate queen, went to the Chinese capital in the wake of the boxer trouble, and this time had to face the unpleasantness of the Tsingtao campaign and the subsequent prolonged negotiations between the Tokio and Pekin governments. Fifteen years ago says she. there was no Japanese lady beside herself in Pekin, and many army officers used to come to her house to ask for Japanese cooking, soon that she felt as if she had gone to China to conduct a Japanese restaurant for men craving for native dishes. But now, the diplomat's wife goes on to observe, there are quite a delegation of Japanese ladies there, and when they meet Chinese ladies in society a feeling of racial and culture affinity seems to bind them in friendship the sooner. Fifteen years ago. when Madame Hioki asked a Chinese minister of state to allow his wife to call on her, his reply was that he would do so 10 years later, so that his lady might go to school and prepare in the meantime. And sure enough. the Chinese women have been transformed of late years and are now wide awake to respond to whatever influence foreign ideas may bring to bear upon them.

"The Finger Prints of Crime"

By CLINTON H. STAGG

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CHAPTER XV.

Alice Haviland.

The confused murmur of far-off voices came to my ears and vaguely annoyed me. Why couldn't they let a man sleep? And what kind of a pillow was it that felt like a man's arm and trembled? Couldn't a man be let alone when he was tired? Then the murmur became words.

"He's coming around," I heard some one say. That sounded like Alice Walton's voice. What did she want around here? She was lost. I had—

"Give me that whisky flask."

That was Jamison. Sure it was. The fiery stuff in my throat choked me and I opened my eyes.

"Thank Heaven!" I heard the lawyer murmur. I tried to sit up, but the nausea overcame me; my side seemed red-hot. I sank back on the held-out arm.

I turned my head and saw it was the coroner who supported me; the coroner I had hit that night. Funny he should be holding me, wasn't it? Ought to arrest me—then the cobwebs cleared away.

"Mike Garven tried to shoot me," I whispered.

"He succeeded," Jamison said grimly. "Another inch and it would have hit your lung. Just grazed a rib. The doctor is on the way."

"I don't need a doctor," I protested as a smile of happiness came. We got him, and we got him good."

"My hunch came right, as I knew it would!" exclaimed Jamison. "When you told me what Kennedy had said of Slivers O'Hagen, and Garven in Virginia, and then the story of the girl's brother, the hunch came. I thought God wouldn't let it go wrong. The detectives could get nothing in Richmond, and I needed the girl to see that thumb-print I threw before her so carelessly. The detectives located her and her father and the banker early this morning in the Bronx."

My eyes hardened. Where was the girl? I couldn't see her in the crowd that surrounded me. But I was sure I had heard her voice.

"I never thought of that," I said lifelessly. "I've been a fool all through. But we got Mike Garven."

A motion of the lawyer's hand separated the crowd. The coroner raised me, and I saw Mike Garven manacled to a chair. It wasn't the Mike Garven I had seen so many times before but a loose-lipped, glaring-eyed, huddled-up figure whose hands twitched at his sides. The thing of stone had become putty. He did not even look at me.

"Slivers O'Hagen's prophecy came more than true," said Jamison solemnly. "The boiler exploded and left nothing but a wreck. He has confessed everything."

"Thank Heaven!" I whispered, and my eyes closed wearily.

I felt a hand touch mine and opened them again.

Kennedy was bending over me, tears streaming down his haggard face.

"Ye'll forgive the thing I did, Jimmy boy?" he pleaded. "Ye'll forgive an old man an' not ask th' reason?"

"Forgive you?" I grinned feebly. "I never had any other feeling. I don't care what he had on you. He's caught at last."

"Thank ye, Jimmy," he said brokenly.

I saw the girl standing over me then. I looked into her eyes eagerly and saw sympathy in them—but not the thing I had prayed for.

"I ask your forgiveness," she said soberly. "I have wronged you cruelly, and you have found my brother's murderer. Father and I thank you."

"All right," I said huskily. This was all she had to say.

Jamison pushed his way through the silent crowd and stood at the girl's side.

"I want you to shake hands with a man who would have given his life for you, Miss Walton," he said earnestly. "A man who had chosen to become a wanderer over the face of the earth, with a price on his head as a murderer, rather than obey the will of the man who had become his master: Jim Haviland, man!"

Something in his eyes and voice made me sit up. I felt the wad of handkerchiefs they had put at my side to stanch the blood slip down; I felt the warm stuff flow again; but I paid no heed.

"Don't you know, girl? " I cried. "Don't you know? I fixed it all up with Carter, the cashier, when I went to the bank that morning. There was a draft all ready, and when I went in the small booth to write the deposit-slip, while Carter kept your father and Trevor talking, a bank messenger whom Carter had fixed was crouched in a corner to take the money—your money.

"He dodged out with it when I took Trevor to the glass shelf at the other side of the bank to write his check. The draft was on its way to Mr. James's bank within ten minutes. The money was in your name. No one could ever touch a cent but you!"

She was on her knees beside me. "Jim!" she sobbed. I felt her soft arms around my body; I saw the wonderful new light in her eyes.

Then I fainted

I guess that's the story.

Had I ever intended to rob them of the money? Heaven help me, yes! Mike Garven had filled my soul with cringing fear. It was not until the night I swore the oath that I won the fight and the sleep came. That's why I packed my suit-case so I could grab it and get away before Mike got Wise.

That's why I stayed at the bank twenty minutes with Carter. I've said I did a mighty big thing for him once—I saved him from jail. He did a mighty big thing for me, and he took a big risk, but it all came out right.

He helped me send the money the one place I knew Mike Garven couldn't get his hands on it.

While he was perfectly willing to show the police all records of my deposits, he wouldn't have shown them the record of that draft without raising a howl. But they never considered that possibility.

Now you understand why I was so anxious to have them go home. They'd have found the money waiting. Or if Mr. James hadn't come up, he'd have wired them instantly. But I know now that the only people in that bank beside the head of it are an old bookkeeper and a kid. They just let that draft lie in a drawer.

Why didn't I tell them about it during that interview in the bank? Because even then I was afraid of Mike getting the money. I think that I believed he was capable of anything then.

That I didn't tell them afterward was just the dog in me, I guess; just the bitterness because I thought the girl had broken her promise, while I'd taken as desperate a chance as a man can take to save her money. When I found that I'd been wrong, and that she and her father had left the hotel, after sending all of their money down to the folks at home, you can understand why it hit me so hard.

Mike Garven? Poor Slivers's prophecy came true, didn't it? Jamison planned the whole game of breaking him. The story he told of how Mike committed the murder was purely imaginative and based on probabilities; but it was true almost to the dot.

Mike had gone to Slivers and pretended to be half dead with fear that O'Hagen would keep his threat. He gave him a thousand dollars, and while O'Hagen was counting the money knifed him.

Then he took back the thousand dollars and fixed the tray, while he handled it with wads of cotton batting. I'd never thought of the possibility of Mike doing the job himself; but, as Jamison said, it was the only thing for him to do. Trusting some one else wouldn't have left him any better off.

I've said before, somewhere in the story, that Mike Garven knew I would go to Kennedy. He did. One of the men sitting and smoking in the back room was Rat-Face, whom I never saw.

He telephoned a description of that raincoat and hat, and Mike took one just like it so that he'd be seen.

He didn't believe for a minute that Jamison's slick work of getting the three men before the inquest and questioning them till he'd put a doubt in their mind was going to queer the whole thing for him.

The trick of throwing the coat over his shoulders and jamming the hat down over his eyes was Jamison's. You saw how it worked on the men the lawyer had prepared for it.

I don't know how he hypnotized those town officials, but he certainly had things all his own way.

Mike never recovered his nerve again, and he was pretty bad with brain fever for a month after the trial.

Most of the newspapers called it retribution, though one or two high-brow writers proved it to be psychology, or physiology, or something like that.

The police woke up then, and I helped them trace down the games Mike had been working. The extent of them amazed even me. He had more than five million dollars!

It was four months before we'd returned as much of it as we could to the victims, and my help got me immunity. The forgery charge was quashed, too. Jamison refused to take a cent of my money, and I turned over every cent of the hundred and sixty-eight thousand to the police. Whisky-Face got off, too; but he was back in jail within a year for trying to work a crude game alone.

Alice? You mean Mrs. Haviland. We were married in New York. Her father insisted on that, thought I wanted to wait until I got a job and some money.

I've told you before that I loved that old man. Heaven knows I do. He took me with open arms, because his own boy went wrong and never had a chance to straighten out, I guess.

By the way, I learned afterward the reason Mike Garven never connected the Walton's with the boy he murdered in Richmond. The kid was pretty wild, and he'd taken another name, and had never even mentioned Little Hazel.

The only two mistakes Mike Garven ever made cost him everything.

The Little Hazel river? We've got the finest power development plant in the south. I went down there when they began work and got a job as laborer. Laborer!

In a few months I was foreman of a gang, and when the plant was finished every man and woman in Little Hazel village and every manufacturer in the city, two miles away, where we sell the power, signed a petition that went to the Swelton company to make me superintendent.

I only work twelve or thirteen hours a day, most of the time; but in the spring, when the Little Hazel becomes a small hell let loose, and our dam and turbines need watching every minute so they won't be torn out by the roots, and when I have to fight with every ounce of flesh and bone I've got, in icy water waist-deep, to open and shut the flood-gates, the day's work runs nineteen or twenty hours.

I got a hundred and fifty a month for it—less than my bachelor apartments used to cost me in Chicago; but every minute I'm working I thank Heaven—and Alice Haviland. It's the only easy money!

THE END.